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# North Texas Daily

Serving the University of North Texas & Denton since 1916

## Sports

# Senior setter Alexa Washington provides perspective as only fourth-year senior

By Ruben Plascencia
Staff Writer

Twice, senior setter Alexa Washington has received uncertain news around Christmas. Both times, trusting a new head coach has rewarded her.

Years before becoming the only player left from North Texas' 2022 recruiting class and playing in two conference tournaments and an invitational tournament, Washington nearly ended up playing college volleyball elsewhere.

Former North Texas volleyball head coach Kristee Porter invited Washington to her new stop with the Mean Green during her senior year at Leon High School in Tallahassee, Florida. Porter had originally recruited Washington to McNeese State in Lake Charles, Louisiana.

"She called me, no heads up or anything, so I'm nervous [...]," Washington said. "At the time, I was like, 'I'm from Florida. North Texas, what even is that?'"

Washington informed herself with a Google search, but her eventual visit to the university is what fully convinced her to come to Denton.

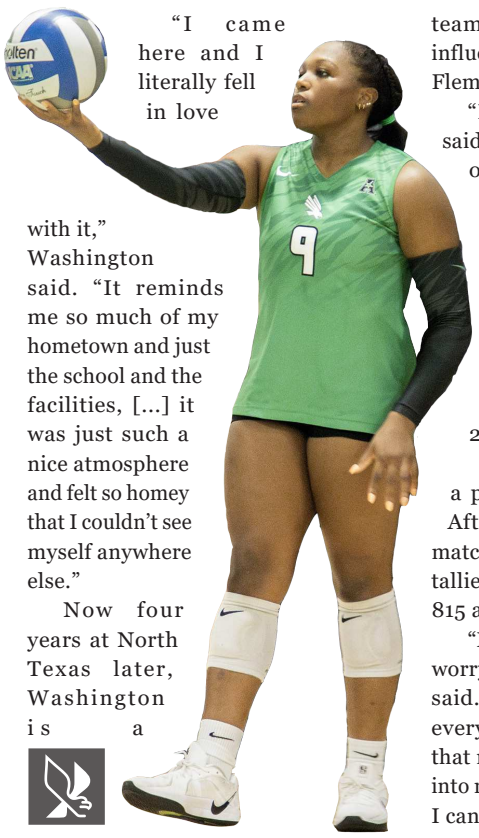

Photo by Ismael Beltran

"I came here and I literally fell in love with it," Washington said. "It reminds me so much of my hometown and just the school and the facilities, [...] it was just such a nice atmosphere and felt so homey that I couldn't see myself anywhere else."

Now four years at North Texas later, Washington is a team captain and one of the more influential players on head coach Dave Fleming's roster.

"Lex is a great leader," Fleming said. "[...] She just has a great pulse on everybody on the team, and I think that's a really unique quality of any of the athletes."

Meanwhile, on the court, Washington is having the best season of her career. Nine games into the season, she has set new single-season highs with 16 kills, 40 attacks and 24.5 points.

She is also on track to set a personal best in season assists. After recording 323 assists in 27 matches last season, Washington has tallied 197 assists thus far and sits at 815 assists throughout her career.

"My job as a setter is to not even worry about myself [...]," Washington said. "My success is determined by everyone else's success, but I think that makes it easier to really just pour into my teammates and do the best that I can to make them successful."

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## News

# New class ring statue unveiled outside of Alumni Center

By Ethan Leach
Staff Writer

The new UNT Ring Statue outside of the Alumni Center was unveiled in a ceremony last week, celebrating the university's longstanding ring tradition.

The ring ceremony was introduced as a commencement tradition in the early 2000s. The ceremony was expanded in 2018 to include the Eagle Ring Dive, during which graduating students submerge their rings in Jody's Fountain in the Library Mall with the subsequent illumination of the McConnell Tower.

Pre-law senior Grace Kadia, who is graduating in December with her bachelor's in psychology, joined with alumnus Chad Flenar, who graduated in 2022 with his master's in mental health counseling, to unveil the bronze statue.

"The statue of the UNT ring that we unveil today represents more than tradition or achievement," Kadia said. "It carries the quiet nights in Willis, the constant laughter spilling from the Union, the connections and student organizations and [the] community that pushes us forward."

The ring statue shares the three layers of symbolism of the university's class rings according to the UNT Alumni site, with each side featuring the mascot, Scrappy. On one side, the McConnell Memorial Tower and clock signify the university's One O'Clock Lab Band and the students' curfew from when the university was still the Texas Normal College and Teacher Training Institute in 1892.

Kadia, who has held several student leadership roles, including president of the Black Law Students' Association and chief justice of the Student Government Association, said unveiling the statue felt like the culmination of her time at the university.

"For students past, present and future, this ring is a reminder that, no matter what, we are connected," Kadia said. "It is [the] heartbeat of our UNT experience."

The university seal is crowned with an eternal flame, representing the students' academic excellence and achievement.

"This ring is an invisible string," Kadia said. "That string binds us to this place, to one another, and to the generations who will come after us. No matter where we scatter across cities, across countries, across careers, UNT will always be the thread that connects us back."

Student Alumni Ambassador Janiya Taylor poses in front of the new ring statue at the UNT Alumni Center on Sept. 10, 2025.
**Photo by Katie Brackens**

Before the start of the ceremony tradition, students who could not afford to purchase their own class rings could be gifted one through the Alumni Association's UNT Ring Program Excellence Endowment Fund. Student Alumni Ambassadors would gift one ring to a student each semester through the UNT Ring Award.

The ceremony, held on Sept. 10, celebrated the establishment of the Leah Hatfield Endowment Fund. Jasmine Carter, alumna and director of alumni engagement, said the fund allows for more students to be gifted a class ring in future semesters.

**RING** continues on page 2

## Arts & Life

The Arts & Autos event returned to the Denton Square on Sept. 13 after being held at the Denton Civic Center last year.
**Photo by Rebecca Hsu**

# Arts & Autos returns to Denton's Downtown Square

By Rebecca Hsu
Staff Writer

Denton's Downtown Square took a step back in time as hundreds of vintage vehicles surrounded the Denton County Courthouse during the Arts & Autos event on Sept. 13. From classic cars and hot rods to vintage motorcycles, each showed its unique design and vibrant colors.

Hosted by the Denton Main Street Association, the event attracted car collectors and enthusiasts to showcase their vehicles, with trophies awarded based on votes from judges and community members. The event also featured other family-friendly activities, including food and craft vendors, live music and a chalk art competition.

"I think everybody looks forward to it [...]," said Tracey Long, former president of the DMSA and board member of the Downtown Denton Foundation. "There's just so many avenues and different things for people to enjoy, and you know, a pretty day like this doesn't hurt."

This year's event returned to the Downtown Square after being held at the Denton Civic Center last year due to construction. Long said she saw people being genuinely happy about the event coming back to downtown.

"I mean, you can't beat the Square in Denton," Long said.

Founded in 1999, Long said Arts & Autos has grown every year, and a new addition this year was the "Electric Avenue," an area dedicated to electric vehicles.

"That's just a whole new subset of cars that didn't exist when we first started doing this event," Long said. "And so it's just part of the growth of the event to not stay stagnant, to stay with the time, to engage as many people across as many interests as possible and get as many people downtown as we can."

Long said about 200 vehicles were around the Square during the event. Among them were several with in-depth histories, such as a 1969 stretch Lincoln Continental limousine.

The car's owner, 76-year-old Kevin Doherty, said the white limousine was part of the U.S. Department of State's fleet in Washington from around 1969 to 1979, that ambassadors would ride in it. Doherty said the car still retains its siren and public-address system, with the national flag and the Chief of Mission flag mounted on the front.

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North Texas Daily

*Editorial Team*

**Editor-in-Chief**
Gianna Ortner-Findlay
@giannae.ortner_reports

**Managing Editor**
Hannah Everett
@hannah.g.everett

**Design Editor**
Mekielle Vaughn
@notso_meek

**Digital Editor**
Aiden Gonzalez
@_xiden

**News Editor**
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**Arts & Life/The Dose Editor**
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**Photo Editor**
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@izzyf1icks

**Illustrations Editor**
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**Sports Editor**
Justin Na

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@janloumas

**Copyeditor**
Baylee Cantrell
@bayleeisonline

**Copyeditor**
Samantha Heath
@samdoesjournalism

Faculty Advisor
Randy Loftis
940-565-3495//Randy.Loftis@unt.edu

Account Executive
Rich Edmond
214-793-3066//Richard.Edmond@unt.edu

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# Bronze statue celebrates class ring tradition

**RING** continued from page 1

Alumna Leah Hatfield, who graduated in 1977 with her bachelor's in business administration, celebrated her commencement wearing her and her mother's class rings.

During her time volunteering to distribute class rings, she said she realized the deeper meaning of class rings to first-generation graduates.

"We don't know what the backgrounds are," Hatfield said. "Ultimately, making it through college and getting to the point where not only do you have the number of hours required to graduate, you've been able to afford a class ring, knowing that there is a very big chance that you can't."

According to the North Texan, Jostens has been the official manufacturer of the university's regalia, including class rings, caps, gowns, stoles and other affiliation accessories since 1998. Currently, class rings can cost students a minimum of $409 using the cheapest material, white lustrum, not including added enhancements.

Josten's paid the company Big Statues of Provo, Utah, directly for the production of the sculpture as stipulated by their partnership contract. Funds for the construction of the pedestal were donated on behalf of the Class of '84 alumnus Rick Herold, who earned a bachelor's and a master's in recreation management.

The University Alumni Association revealed a new campus landmark at the UNT Alumni Center on Sept. 10, 2025. **Photo by Katie Brackens**

Before he died in 2010, Herold endowed the Julia Wakeley Scholarship for students in the Department of Kinesiology, Health Promotion and Recreation. The university later memorialized his death by creating the Rick Herold Parks and Recreation Endowed Scholarship.

The Alumni Association said its only direct spending for the ceremony was for catering and floral arrangements, purchased through approved vendors.

"It doesn't take away from the student experience, student opportunities or anything," Carter said. "These were purely alumni who have, you know, had a class ring in the past. They believe in the ring, the source of pride and tradition for our alumni."

# Faculty members awarded Institute for the Advancement of the Arts fellowships for projects

**By Joseph Neuenschwander**
Staff Writer

Since 2009, the university's Institute for the Advancement of the Arts has awarded fellowships to its faculty to advance the arts. This year, the university has awarded three members of its faculty for their projects on grief, violence and music.

The fellowship was created in 2009 to support university professors in the performing and visual arts. Each professor who received this fellowship will have one semester off to work on their project.

"[Receiving this fellowship] was certainly a lovely surprise," said Josh Gilbert, assistant professor of practice and Daytime Emmy winner. "I'd applied for it a couple of times before because it is a big one, so it is great to actually have it."

The project Gilbert plans to make is a stop-motion film about end-of-life care and the difficulties some face when they are at the end of their life. Gilbert said he wanted to start a conversation about end-of-life care because a lot of people find themselves alone and without a support system at the end of their lives.

"It is just something that, even though it happens to everybody, we don't talk about it very much," Gilbert said. "So while it does sound like a depressing idea for a stop motion thing, I was trying to find a way to at least give something that could start a conversation about it."

The plot of Gilbert's stop-motion film will follow a man at the end of his life who has no family or support system in his final days.

"It was the idea of, is there some way of starting a conversation sooner, so that it doesn't get to the point of anyone being on their own and having to navigate things by themselves," Gilbert said.

Gilbert said he was inspired by a neighbor and friend he had while living in California. After Gilbert left and moved to Denton, his friend got sick.

"I was one of his only friends, and he got sick," Gilbert said. "By the time I got back to see him, it went rather quickly, and he was gone."

Gilbert said the reason he chose stop-motion animation was that it allowed him to make objects into living things, and because if he did it through other mediums like live-action, it would exceed his budget.

"Being able to build all that stuff in miniature and animate it frame by frame, it's just more practical," Gilbert said.

Binod Shrestha, a professor of studio arts and director of the foundations program, is working on a theatrical production that will be a multi-sensory experience. Shrestha's project explores the theme of violence and its impact on humanity.

"Going into grad school, part of that is on what is your creative process and, for the lack of a better word, what inspires you," Shrestha said. "So for me, as a part of my research process, I was trying to look at what I really want to talk about in my work."

Shrestha said that as he thought about what he wanted his work to be about, he found that while watching the news and looking at his past, "violence seems to be very inherent in humanity."

(From left to right) Sungji Hong, Binod Shrestha and Josh Gilbert. Credit **UNT System**

"Now we have access to news everywhere and at any given time," Shrestha said. "I think, even if there's nothing happening in our day-to-day lives, there is conflict in other parts of the world."

Shrestha said he chose to use a multi-sensory experience for this piece to give people a different way to look at how violence impacts humanity.

"We navigate the world through five primary senses," Shrestha said. "At any given time, we might be using one sense more than another. So, I think multi-sensory might give audiences a different way to look at how violence is shaping us, versus looking at a painting or looking at a sculpture."

Sungji Hong, composer and associate professor of composition, is composing a new piece of chamber music for her project. She is working with a German-based group called Handwerk, which will perform the piece. It will premiere in the summer of 2026 in Cologne, Germany, and the band will also fly to Denton to perform.

"As a UNT professor, receiving an IAA fellowship was like one of the things that I dreamed of," Hong said. "So I was really happy, and I was really grateful."

Hong said when she starts writing her pieces, they are blank.

"I don't know how to [start] at the beginning," Hong said. "It takes some time to come to a kind of concrete idea of how I will begin."

As Hong writes her music, she said she starts with writing the best part of the song, which is often the climax of the music. Then, over a six to seven-hour day, she will write the music and edit the writing as she sees fit.

"It's interesting, you know, how the work comes together in the end," Hong said.

# Council directs staff to finish overdue audits, add 3 new projects

By Diego Hernandez
Deputy News Editor

The Denton City Council directed staff to focus on financial planning, vehicle management and climate preparedness in the city's 2025–26 internal audit plan during a special-called work session.

City Auditor Madison Denton said her office has about 22,400 hours available this year, but is still facing a backlog after last year's audit schedule shifted. She presented the options to focus only on delayed follow-up reviews, complete both last year's and this year's follow-ups or attempt a mix.

"Due to last year's audit plan changes, a significant number of follow-up reviews scheduled for completion were pushed to future years," Denton said during the meeting. "The goal for the strategic plan is to follow up on an audit project initially within 27 months. However, this will not likely be possible due to those changes."

From a list of potential new projects that included jail operations, tourism initiatives and volunteer management, council members named financial planning as their top choice.

Mayor Pro Tem Suzi Rumohr said catching up on past reviews should take priority and questioned the "point of doing an audit" if not completed promptly.

"If your finances aren't in order, it's really hard to do the rest of what you're supposed to be doing," Rumohr said during the meeting. "That's the core to a city."

Mayor Gerard Hudspeth talks to the public during the special-called work session on Sept. 9, 2025. **Photo by Katie Brackens**

During last week's special session, Council Member Jill Jester said the city should use its audits to improve efficiency.

"We've got to focus on financial efficiencies," Jester said during the meeting. "That is the number one thing that I'm seeing and that I'm hearing from people."

Jester also raised cybersecurity concerns, pointing to ransomware attacks in other industries. Denton said a network security audit had already been completed and was scheduled for a follow-up in 2026.

Council members also debated how much weight to give residents' input on audit priorities. Twenty people filled out the community survey used to rank projects.

"We have 0.10 percent of citizens that responded," Jester said during the meeting. "While we of course want to take every resident that took the time to complete the survey's opinion into consideration, there is the question of how much weight to give when it's less than one percent."

Jester said the low response reflected the city's transient population and urged patience in engaging more residents.

"It just takes time and it takes a lot of work for us that have been here for a while, that want to push that message out and have the biggest, loudest voice for them to know that they are welcome here," Jester said.

The council also discussed how to evaluate equity as part of audits. Jester said the term was too broad and argued there needed to be a discussion regarding "the equity of opportunities or equity of outcome."

Denton clarified that equity is one of five categories required by government auditing standards, alongside economy, efficiency, effectiveness and ethics.

Council member Brian Beck pressed to add vehicle management to the plan, citing the city's upcoming shift from financing fleet purchases with debt to paying upfront.

"That is immediate, guaranteed to hit us next year," Beck said during the meeting. "Why would we not focus on that and make it a priority? What better time to have a good capture of what our vehicle management process is?"

Beck also mentioned airport operations as a possible area of review, but the majority leaned toward vehicle management and climate planning.

Council members agreed not to carry forward an annual compliance review of their own travel and expenses, saying the review could be brought back if needed.

Staff will now revise the plan to complete delayed follow-ups, begin a financial planning audit and restructure hours for vehicle management and weather preparedness. The updated plan will return to the council later this fall for approval.

## NEWS AROUND THE WORLD

By Shehzil Imran & Diego Hernandez
News Editor/Deputy News Editor

### First female prime minister appointed in Nepal

Former Nepal Supreme Court chief justice Sushila Karki became the first female prime minister of Nepal on Sept. 12. Five days prior to Karki's appointment as prime minister, protests broke out throughout the country, torching government buildings and causing the resignation of Prime Minister Khagda Prasad Sharma Oli's government. Gen Z group Hami Nepal, consisting of over 160,000, created an online channel called Youth Against Corruption on the gaming app Discord, which was used to hold debates and create polls to elect the country's next leader.

### United States reaches deal with China to continue operations of TikTok

The Trump administration announced on Sept. 16 that a framework agreement has been reached between the U.S. and China for TikTok to continue operations in the country. While the details of the deal have not been released, it requires for the app's U.S. data to be transferred from TikTok owners ByteDance to U.S. owners. Trump and Chinese leader Xi Jinping are to formally figure out the details through a phone call on Sept. 19. The deal comes a day before Trump's deadline for the app to either sell to a U.S. company or shut down operations in the country. In tandem with the agreement, the administration extended the deadline for the app to continue operating in the U.S. until Dec. 16 while the details are being figured out.

### UN Experts say Israel is committing genocide in Gaza

A U.N. commissioned team concluded Sept. 16 that Israel is committing genocide in Gaza, urging the international community to act and hold leaders accountable. The commission cited killings, severe harm, siege-induced starvation and destruction of healthcare- claiming Israeli authorities, including Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, bear responsibility. Israel rejected the report, claiming it was false and distorted. While the findings do not carry legal repercussions, they could be used in the International Criminal Court or the International Court of Justice.

### UN Report Alleges Massive Government Corruption Amid South Sudan Food Crisis

A U.N. commission reported Tuesday that billions of dollars in South Sudanese public funds have been stolen over the past decade, worsening a severe national food crisis. The oil-for-roads program, the government's flagship infrastructure project, saw $1.7 billion unaccounted for, while 95 percent of planned roads remain incomplete. The government dismissed the findings as "absurd" in a statement. Meanwhile, nearly all counties face severe food insecurity, health and education systems are underfunded.

# Local businesses celebrate Mexican Independence Day and Hispanic Heritage Month

By Sophia Carbajal
Senior Arts & Life Writer

Under the string lights of a food truck park and market, El Zócalo, several Folklorico dancers wearing brightly colored traditional Jalisco-style dresses, as the fabric flutters in the setting sun.

The performance was part of an event called Viva México, where several Denton community members celebrated ahead of Mexican Independence Day and the start of Hispanic Heritage Month on Sept. 13 from 5-10 p.m. Mexican Independence Day is observed on Sept. 16 and celebrates Mexico's separation from Spain in 1810.

"It is important for the current generation to see and feel proud of their culture," said Kate Romero Ramos, a university dance major and president of the university group Folxlórico. "It also sends a message to people. We are here, we are seen and we are proud."

Romero Ramos said Ballet Folklorico has been an essential way for her to connect with her Mexican heritage and maintain cultural tradition, as folklorico dances are a vibrant display of culture used in times of celebration.

The event dedicated time for people of all Hispanic and Latino backgrounds to connect with their culture and heritage. Latin American countries Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua, all celebrate their independence from Spain on Sept. 15, a day that is now the start of Hispanic Heritage Month.

Attendees of Viva México were encouraged to celebrate their rich cultural heritage by shopping from many Latino-owned businesses, watching dance performances, listening to Latin music and enjoying meals from a selection of food trucks.

Ballet Folklorico is a traditional style of highly choreographed dance derived from different cultural regions of Mexico. Folklorico performers danced to traditional songs throughout the event as their family members cheered and clapped along.

Folklorico groups ranging from fourth graders to seniors in college performed throughout the night. A school group from Alexander Elementary School began performing at 5:30 p.m., followed by groups from Nette Shultz Elementary School, Ryan High School and the university's own Folxlórico.

Five members of Folxlórico performed to "El Son de la Negra," a popular mariachi song and dance in the style of the Mexican state of Jalisco. Romero Ramos said she thinks spaces like El Zócalo are lacking in Denton but are a necessary part of keeping Latino traditions and cultures alive.

"To have these spaces not only [allows] people to embrace and share their culture but also allows others to look in and witness these cultures," Romero Ramos said. "By sharing and witnessing, people can come together as a more unified community."

One of the event organizers, Victor Ambrosio, 46, owns two businesses in the El Zócalo market: Second Hand Sports and Game Swap and Ambro's Tacos Y Más, which celebrated the soft opening of its bar during the Viva México event. Ambrosio, who grew up in Mexico City, said he missed the vibrant culture and thinks it is essential to have spaces like that in Denton.

Ambrosio helped organize the event because he wanted to celebrate Latino identity by creating a space that felt like a home away from home for members of the community.

"We feel like we're right at home, and I feel like that's what we were missing," Ambrosio said. "I'm not trying to get paid or be someone, I just want to have a spot for something else that would make people feel comfortable, just like I would."

Event organizer and M&B Tiny Shop owner Biri Ordoñez helps an attendee with their purchase during the Viva México event at El Zòcalo on Sept. 13, 2025. **Photo by Thomas Trevino**

Ambrosio said he wants to make plans with other business owners to host more events like Viva México throughout Hispanic Heritage Month, so members of the Latino community can feel like they belong.

"I feel like there's a lot of Hispanic people sometimes who don't know how to feel comfortable in their own culture and their own environment," Ambrosio said. "I personally would drive an hour, hour and a half to go to a place like this just to be able to play the music that I like to listen to and that other people can enjoy as well.

One of the other event organizers, Biri Ordoñez, 36, is the owner of M&B Tiny Shop, a small business that used to have a storefront in El Zócalo but is now an online store. Along with several other small business owners, Ordoñez set up a small version of her store for attendees to shop from.

Ordoñez sold items like jewelry, clothing, journals and bags handmade by Mexican and Guatemalan artisans. All of the items are covered in brightly colored designs, but the most striking are the mercado bags, a traditional type of bag named for its use in markets or grocery stores, which are made of woven recycled plastic that creates intricate patterns.

Ordoñez said she opened up her shop in 2018 because of the lack of Latino representation in her community. One of the most essential things to Ordoñez is to carry on cultural traditions like dance, art and language to future generations.

"It's important to represent who we are and not forget what our parents did for us and why they came here in the first place and to continue in that generation," Ordoñez said. "I don't want our children to forget where we come from, because that's always going to be part of us."

## Things To Do:

### Bubble Party

When: Saturday, Sept. 20 at 6 p.m.
Where: Green Goddess Revival, 1807 N. Elm St.
What: To celebrate the four year anniversary of Denton's Green Lounge, Green Goddess Revival is inviting guests to a bubble party and rave. Featuring DJ's, vendors, visuals, bubbles, ice cream and more. Green Goddess states the event is for anyone looking to get into EDM/raves in a welcoming and safe environment. Attendees must be 21 or older and tickets are $15.

### Denton's Blues Fest

When: Friday, Sept. 19-21
Where: Quakertown Park, 321 E. Mckinney St.
What: A longstanding Denton tradition, the Blues Festival features live music, karaoke, arts and crafts and more. Presented by the Denton Black Chamber of Commerce, The Denton Blues Festival returns for its 27th year of incredible live music, local vendors and community celebration.

### Paper Jam + more

When: Thursday, Sept. 18 at 7 p.m.
Where: Rubber Gloves Rehersal Studio, 411 E. Sycamore St.
What: Paper Jam is a local indie Twee Band known for their bright alt-pop sound from Austin,TX. Tickets are $10, and attendees must be 18 and up. Other bands performing are Denton band, My Point of You, alongside bands Judge Roy Scream and Spring Cleaning.

# Arts & Autos takes Denton community back in time

ARTS
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Doherty said he first came across the limousine in a catalog when he was 19 years old and immediately fell in love with it. Another of his dream cars was a 1969 Rolls-Royce. As a young man, he told himself, "Someday I'm going to own these cars," and around 20 years ago, he made that dream a reality.

"A lot of vehicles you'll find, they're owned by old, gray-haired people, because that's when they can afford the dream car that they dreamed of years ago," Doherty said. "And it makes them feel like 'I finally made it.'"

Doherty added that the design and style of vintage vehicles are another reason people are drawn to them.

"Every car today looks exactly like the other car," Doherty said. "That's not true in the old days. I mean, you can tell a Lincoln from a Cadillac from any, like a Ford Mustang versus a Chevrolet Camaro, so I think people are more appreciative of the style of the cars."

Some vehicles at the event also carried family stories, like a 1954 Buick Skylark owned by the McCanons.

Denton resident Kyle McCanon, 32, said his grandfather first purchased the car in 1972, and it was later passed down to his father. McCanon said the three of them restored different parts of the vehicle, and he thinks it is meaningful to see the history of what his grandfather and father once drove.

He said he noticed vintage cars were built differently from contemporary ones.

"There [was] so much room for the engine, where today, everything's packed in and tight, and you really have just enough room for what you need," McCanon said. "But back then, they had a different stylistic approach to cars that was more roomy."

Craig Reed, 55, who runs Reed CycleWorks, a motorcycle service specializing in restoring vintage motorcycles, said there is a "cool factor" that cannot be replaced in vintage cars and motorcycles.

"It is what brings out stories," Reed said. "It is memories. It's what brings out memories from people who have had them in the past."

To ensure the Arts & Autos event runs smoothly and safely, Long said many community members volunteered to help.

"It's really a community effort, [and] that's really beautiful to see as well," Long said.

The Arts & Autos event showcased classic cars around Denton's Downtown Square on Sept. 13, 2025. **Photo by Rebecca Hsu**

# 'It's moving art,' local artists and car enthusiasts join together for Denton's first-ever Art Car Cruise event

**By Sophia Carbajal**
Senior Writer

For the first time in the town's history, cars covered from tailpipe to headlight in colorful paints and craft items cruised around the Denton Square, revving their engines.

The cars then parked bumper to bumper in the Patterson-Appleton Arts Center parking lot as people came from every direction to see the moving works of art and the artists who made them. Houston resident Richard Tuthill, 73, was the owner of one of these art cars and said his work is about creating an obvious statement to the world.

"One of my things in life, and I mean this really seriously, I want to see inexplicable things," Tuthill said. "To a lot of people, this is inexplicable. To me, it's about the things in life that make me go 'Wow.'"

The event was held on Sept. 12 from 6 to 9 p.m. and featured an array of custom car decorations like colorful painted designs, glued-on beads and gems, fur, googly eyes, LED lights and speakers.

Seven of the eight art car owners drove from their hometown in Houston, where they took part in the annual Orange Show's Houston Art Car Parade & Festival, the largest celebration of art cars in the world. Tuthill has been a part of the Art Car Parade for 36 years, sometimes as a volunteer and other times driving his art cars.

His first project was a Volkswagen Beetle he named Paisley Chaos, which Tuthill estimates he spent around 4,000 hours decorating. Tuthill, as well as several other Houston art car owners, drove to Denton to help get the town's first-ever Art Car Cruise started.

Tuthill's current art car, The Amazing Wow, was originally a plain, white 2010 Nissan Altima, but is now completely covered in hand-painted designs.

"People will ask me, 'Why don't you drive a normal car?' and I would say, 'This is normal,'" Tuthill said. "Once you drive an art car, you can't not drive an art car."

The Art Car Cruise was organized by Krissi Oden, a university alumna and the executive director of GDAC. Oden said the event served as a pre-celebration to Denton's annual Arts & Autos event that took place the day after, on Sept. 13.

Oden said she wants people to learn about more forms of art and enjoy the community that comes with it.

"Art is really the thing that brings people together," Oden said. "People are coming in off the streets. It sparks curiosity, and it creates moments for people to come together through the arts. Denton's cool, Denton's art, our identity is the art."

Adding on to the eight cars that participated in the cruise, the GDAC also added some of its own. Local artist Eder Martinez, 40, actively spray-painted designs on one of the cars throughout the event, with another car being used as an art project open to the community that attendees could paint on with a wide variety of spray paint colors provided by GDAC.

The smell of paint filled the air as dozens of people added their own unique designs to the community car: a Honda Accord given to GDAC for this event by Molly Carter, a member of the Denton Mainstreet Association. People of all ages spray-painted designs in every color, adding features like black and white eyes on the front headlights. At the end of the night, every inch of the once golden car was transformed from wheel to windshield as the graffiti tags of each artist covered it.

Though the art cars are decorated on every surface, they are entirely legal, and many of the artists drive their cars every day. These art car owners are known as daily drivers and use their art piece as both unique entertainment and functional transportation.

One of these daily drivers, Rebecca Lowe, 56, is the president of the Houston Art Car Klub and led the cruise through the Denton Square. Lowe's car is one of the most elaborate, with hand-painted maps, LED lights and sculptural spray foam pieces covering each surface of the car. Lowe bought her car, called Map of Space and Time, in 2009 and has been working on it ever since.

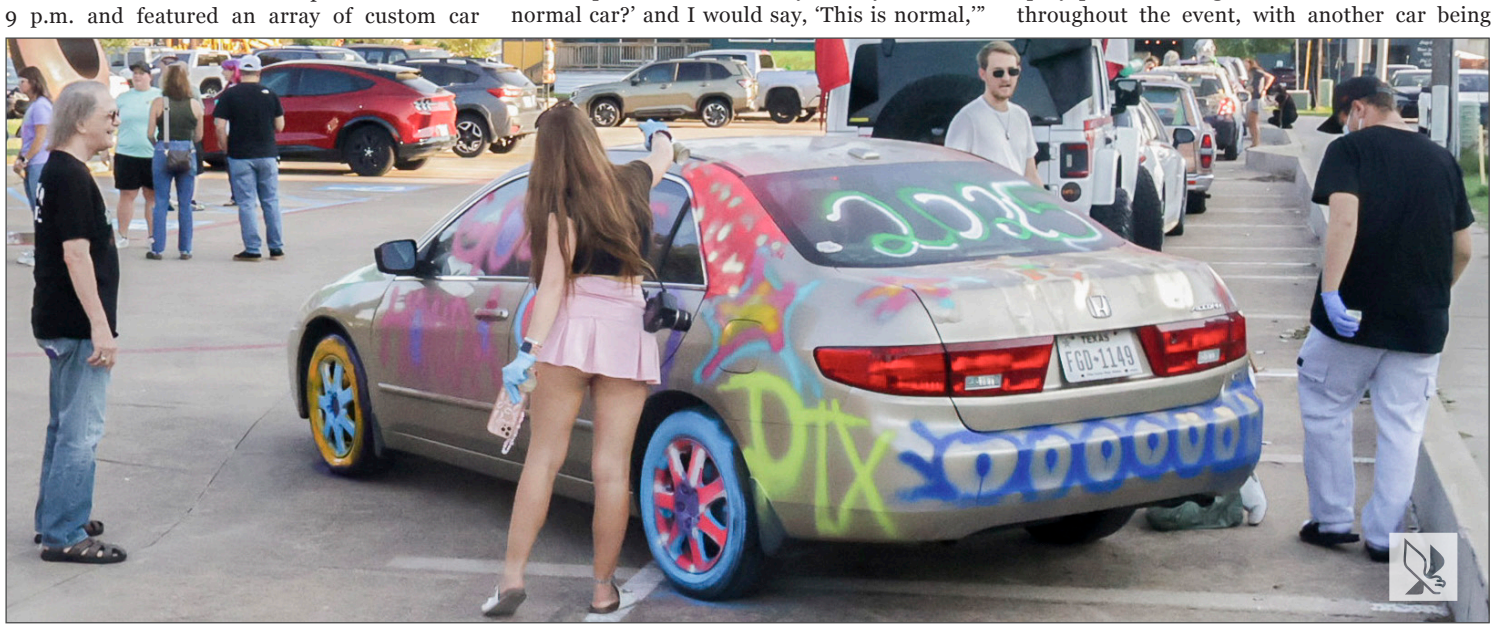
Art cars are like living documents, since the artists are never really done working on their projects. Even though Lowe's car is far from ordinary, she has the urge to add more and more.

"Right now it feels very boring to me, because there's nothing new and I haven't gotten my hands on it," Lowe said.

Oden said she wants the Art Car Cruise to become an annual event in Denton to help the community celebrate as many types of art as possible.

The community-painted art car now lives outside the PAAC building near downtown.

"It's moving art," Oden said. "As we went around the square earlier, not one person was smiling and waving. Art does that to people, so we're hoping that this event grows and becomes a huge thing for Denton."



The Greater Denton Arts Council and Denton Main Street Association hosted the Art Car Cruise on Sept. 12, 2025. **Photo by Isabella Ferreri**

# Hollow Knight: Silksong finally releases, sings a new era for Metroidvania video games

By Jake Wilkinson
Staff Writer

Hollow Knight: Silksong, the highly anticipated follow-up to 2017's Hollow Knight, was released after a 7-year development cycle. The sequel hit digital storefronts, selling 3.2 million copies, after fans clamored for a sequel for the past decade.

Team Cherry invites players to a world of mystery and wonder as Hornet is trapped beneath an unfamiliar world. She must adventure through new lands, face mighty foes and discover the mysteries of the haunted kingdom of Farloom. In this world of beast and bug, only Hornet's skills, acrobatics and senses of discovery will guide her to unravel the mysteries of this fallen kingdom.

Hollow Knight: Silksong, like its predecessor, is a metroidvania-style video game. The term was introduced to describe two pioneers of the genre, Nintendo's 1994 space epic Super Metroid and Konami Digital Entertainment's gothic nightmare Castlevania: Symphony of the Night. The genre prides itself on vast interconnected locales with unique visual variety, having players backtrack to collect upgrades, face formidable foes and progress at their own pace.

Hollow Knight: Silksong proves that the genre can innovate, meet and exceed expectations of fans, while drawing in new players. As seen on its launch day, it crashed every major online gaming retailer within its first 24 hours.

However, that did not stop players from exploring this new kingdom. Hollow Knight was praised for its stellar art direction, one that looks hand-drawn down to the backgrounds, all of which are amazing, and the game's sequel raises the bar for the series's beauty and art.

Illustration by Ham Bergman

The first couple of areas of the game make a statement. From the beginning area of Moss Grotto after Hornet finds herself captured, players are set free to ascend the kingdom to its peak. Here, players learn the different movement options, such as Hornet's basic combat moves, as well as basking in the lush environment before fighting the first major boss and progressing into the Bone Bottom village. Each is lush with verdant greens and marrow white atmosphere that draws the player ever higher to the kingdom's greatest secrets and deadliest challenges.

The area of Bone Bottom proves to be one of the improvements Hollow Knight: Silksong possesses. With the town's renewed sense of purpose, compared to the first game, the area is vastly more lively. In the village, Hornet can rest at benches that act in a similar function to Bonfires found in the Dark Souls series. She can equip charms that will grant benefits or alterations to her base moveset and movements, all while accompanied by the subtle music cues, composed by Hollow Knight's original composer, Christopher Larken, and the wonderful singing by fan favorite character Sherma, who Hornet befriends in-game.

The music throughout was extraordinary, conveying the empty, somber nature of the fallen kingdom of the original title's Hollownest. Hollow Knight: Silksong ups the ante by having more fast-paced and acoustic tracks. Moss Grotto and Bone Bottom exude a hopeful yet melancholic nature, reflecting the bug's optimistic spirit and her ambition to reach the kingdom's peak. Larken's score is simply phenomenal and a huge part of what makes the series so special, but it is second only to the gameplay.

Hollow Knight: Silksong has a fast-paced, tough-as-nails mentality to how it handles difficulty, which has been a hot debate since the game's release. Similar to Capcom's classic Mega Man games, Hollow Knight: Silksong is incredibly difficult.

The infamous Hunters March has been a point of contention, and it does lead to the game's biggest problem: pacing. Due to the game's checkpoint system, some boss run backs, which involve traveling back through areas and hazards to reach a boss, can be quite tedious and slow down the title's otherwise excellent pacing. Some boss fights can be a test of endurance rather than of skills.

Team Cherry does a tremendous job in balancing the game, so when all of its components come together, it is more grandiose than Hollow Knight, yet still has the small Australian developers' passion put in. New locations, different traversal tools and different patches of difficulty prove that Hollow Knight: Silksong is its own beast. It is an ambitious, beautiful follow-up to what was already a tremendous accomplishment.

If Hollow Knight was this generation's Super Metroid, then Silksong is the Castlevania: Symphony of the Night that expands on one of the most beloved indie darlings of the last decade.

While there are some pacing issues with longer, more tedious areas and frustrating boss fights, the highs are still significant in comparison. Fewer things are more satisfying in a metroidvania than conquering a new domain, unlocking a brand new traversal ability and flying through gorgeously made areas after hours of memorable exploration. Hollow Knight: Silksong sings not only for a new era of metroidvania games, but also as a bright beacon of hope for the gaming industry going forward.

**Jake's rating: 4.5/5**

## Icon of the Week:

### Hermeto Pascoal

Credit **Tom Beetz**

The *Daily*'s icon of the week is the late Hermeto Pascoal who passed on Sept. 13, 2025. A Brazilian composer and multi-instrumentalist, Pascoal was a Grammy Award winner as well as an internationally acclaimed musician.

Born in Olho d'Água das Flores, Brazil on June 22, 1932, Pascoal was albino and prone to severe sun burns, something that forced him to stay indoors instead of working out on the farms like the rest of his family.

With this freetime, he started playing his fathers accordion and by age eight he taught himself the flute. By 11 he performed in various music groups, and by 1950 Pascoal and his family moved to Recife, the largest urban area in Northern Brazil.

By the 1960s, his career took off with him appearing on several regionally famous samba and jazz groups. His work was often inspired by Brazilian folk music, something he heard growing up.

Later known as "o Bruxo," or "the Sorcerer," Pascoal often made music with unconventional methods and instruments, which allowed for his unique folkloric sound.

He used nature as a basis for many of his compositions, as in his "Música da Lagoa," in which the musicians burble water and play glass bottles and flutes while immersed in a lagoon.

# Twenty One Pilots explores familiar musicality with eighth studio album 'Breach'

By Ismael Beltran
Photo Editor

Alternative rock group Twenty One Pilots returns to the scene with their eighth studio album, "Breach," 16 months after their last release, "Clancy" in May 2024, making it the shortest gap between album releases in the band's entire career.

In contrast to their previous works, "Breach" reflects Twenty One Pilots' eagerness to evolve while staying true to the themes and sounds that made them known. The album leans in to Tyler Joseph and Josh Dun's signature mix of rap, pop and alternative rock.

The 13-track, 47-minute project opens with the tone-setting "City Walls." Starting fast but slowing midway and closing with a mix of synths and heavy percussion, the song shows a glimpse of the album's dynamic pacing.

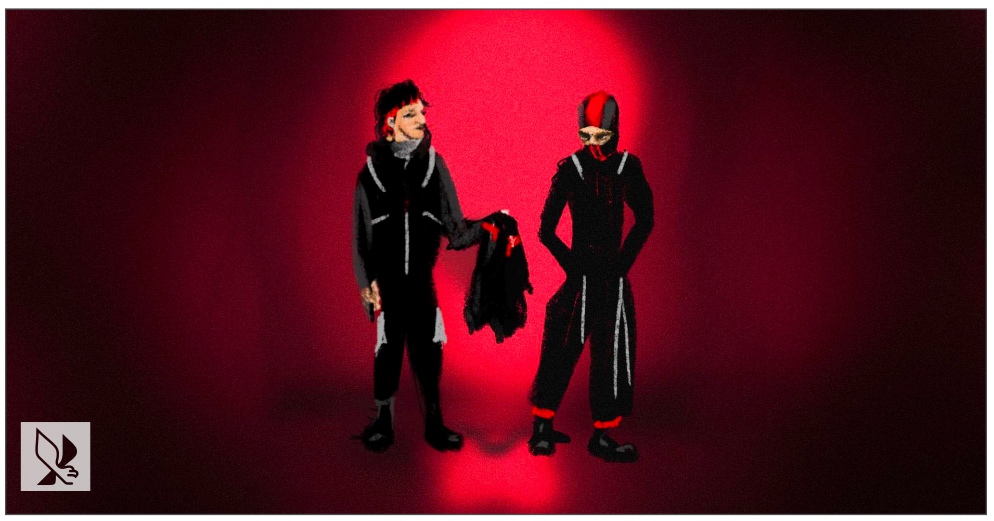


Illustration by Victoria Maldonado

Dun's drums kick in from the first second of audio. At the same time, Joseph sings in the chorus, "I wanted you to show me the way around those city walls," introducing the listeners to the barriers of the city, which symbolize his doubts and expectations, and the desire to overcome and achieve them.

Tracks two through five, "RAWFEAR," "Drum Show," "Garbage" and lead single "The Contract" serve more as interludes and do not offer anything revolutionary. While not groundbreaking, they help the pacing by connecting the strong opener with a more solidified middle section.

Not all tracks land with equal impact, however. Track six, "Downstairs," serves as a step down in the album's momentum. Joseph reflects on seeking refuge and finding comfort "downstairs," stating, "Downstairs, I feel better in the cellar." However, these lyrics are repetitive, and the song structure it is built around makes it bland and forgettable.

Following it, track seven "Robotic Voices," restores the album to its previous balance. Layered around a synth-robotic beat, the song pairs Dun's rhythmic drumming with a catchy chorus, "Then the robot voices would reassure me," turning a robotic gimmick into a poetic and somewhat wholesome love song.

"Center Mass," track eight, opens with an audio snippet from one of the band's live concerts. The sampled performance was in Manchester, where a fan stole Dun's drum. "Girl, I really don't think you should take that," is heard from another fan.

From there, the tempo picks up and Joseph's chorus, "I pull on my shirt sleeve to cover half of my hands/ Bring my arms closer to my body, get as small as I can/ They call it center mass, that part they aim for," blends both vulnerability with rhythmic intensity.

Track 10, "One Way," brings a much-needed pop-infused vibe to the record. Softer drums accompany the chorus, "I wanted to fly, but they say a system is coming in," painting a metaphorical picture of wanting freedom, with the desire to soar representing ambition or self-expression.

In the following track, Dun says, "It does feel like quite a vibe change," leading into track 11, "Days Lie Dormant," and it surely does. The song begins fast, with a transition midway into a slower piano interlude, highlighting Joseph's vocals with a build-up soon after.

Track 12, "Tally," feels like a nod to Twenty One Pilots' earlier 2013 "Vessel" era, featuring heavy drums and a pulsing energy. The track feels like a high-speed chase in a video game, making the song a standout in the album's latter half.

The album closes with "Intentions," a slow and reflective finale. Joseph sings, "Intentions are everything," bringing the record to a sorrowful close and bringing "good intentions" to the end of the album.

"Breach" ultimately demonstrates that Twenty One Pilots are committed to their niche, but in a way that feels intentional rather than ironic. The album does not reinvent the band's wheel, but it does solidify their core and shows their willingness to experiment can coexist with what they have been doing for years.

While it may not achieve the cultural significance of earlier works like "Blurryface" (2015) or "Trench," (2018) "Breach" reinforces why Twenty One Pilots continues to stick with their listeners.

"Breach" succeeds where it matters most by featuring memorable choruses, inventive beats and emotional lyrics. For longtime fans, the album feels like a continuation of the duo's evolving story. The result is an engaging, if occasionally middle-of-the-road, listening experience that reaffirms Twenty One Pilots' place in the modern alternative landscape.

**Ismael's rating: 3.5/5**

# Senior Washington 'has a pulse on everybody' in final season at North Texas

SENIOR
continued from page 1

Washington's role this season hinged on another Christmastime phone call with a new coach after Fleming took over at North Texas this past December.

"I was really nervous about meeting Dave," Washington said. "I didn't know what those practices were going to look like, I didn't know what his coaching philosophy was. Honestly, I felt like I was a freshman."

Once Fleming got Washington on the phone, the conversation put the uncertainty to rest. He asked about her and her family, helping to get situated at a personal level before even talking about volleyball.

Now, Fleming says Washington is a role model for the players he wants to have at North Texas, particularly thanks to her commitment to the program.

"I think it is really important that she has been at UNT for four years," Fleming said. "That's our goal for this program, that we don't want to attack the transfer portal. We want the Lex Washingtons of the world."

Washington is coming off a career weekend at the UNT-UTA Invitational, where she set a personal best for assists twice. Against the University of Texas at Arlington, she had a career night with 32 assists, 16 digs, five kills and three blocks, all single-season highs.

Freshman setter Sidney Soria has had equal success splitting time and learning from Washington. The pair has finished first or second in assists for every match this season, allowing junior outside hitter Jahniya Jackson to find success, among others.

Senior setter Alexa Washington prepares for the next play against Little Rock on Sept. 12, 2025. **Photo by Ismael Beltran**

"Always shoutout to Sidney and Alexa for setting up balls and setting me up in the right way so I can score," Jackson said.

Her assisting strength continues off the volleyball court, where she plans to work towards becoming a children's trauma therapist upon graduating in the spring.

"Pretty soon, I'm going to be applying for grad schools so I can get my master's [degree]," Washington said. "Hopefully, I will become a counselor and specialize in children's trauma. That's my main goal."

Until then, her leadership and wealth of experience will continue to aid a young but talented Mean Green team throughout an already successful 2025 season.

"To see how much the program has changed and grown since I was a freshman," Washington said. "Seeing all the positives and [...] [helping] create a culture and set a standard that hopefully will be continued after I graduate is really awesome."

## Athlete of the Week:

### Shane Whitter

Credit **Mean Green Sports**

Senior Mean Green linebacker Shane Whitter earned the American Conference's Defensive Player of the Week for his performance in the team's 59-10 win over Washington State. In the dominant defensive performance that caused five turnovers on the day, Whitter recorded a team-leading eight total tackles, one tackle for loss and an interception that he returned 43 yards. In addition to the American's weekly award, he also was named to Pro Football Focus' National Team of the Week that selects one college football player per each of the 11 possible starting positions on both sides of the ball. On the year as a whole, Whitter has 25 tackles which also leads the team, alongside three quarterback hits. This is Whitter's second season with North Texas in his six-year career with the previous four coming with the University of Oklahoma from 2020-2023.

## At a Glance:

### Football

After a 59-10 performance against Washington State, North Texas football (3-0) takes on its first American Conference opponent in the United States Military Academy on Sept. 20 at 11 a.m. The Mean Green have begun undefeated to start the year. After Army (1-1) have one more non-conference game before fully starting their American slate of games. Army (1-1) won the last encounter with the Mean Green 14-3 last season in Denton on Nov. 9, 2024. Now North Texas will travel to West Point, New York to take on the Black Knights coming off a 24-21 victory over Kansas State.

### Volleyball

Mean Green volleyball (7-2) will take on three opponents in Stephenville, Texas in the upcoming Texan Classic against Louisiana Tech (5-5), Arkansas-Pine Bluff (0-9) and Tarleton State (4-4) from Sept. 18-20. North Texas is coming off of a 3-2 win over the University of Texas at Arlington (8-1) that spoiled the Mavericks' undefeated start to the season. North Texas' first game of the next invitational will be Louisiana Tech on Sept. 18 at 2 p.m.

### Soccer

To start American Conference play, North Texas (4-5-1) takes on the University of Texas at San Antonio in San Antonio on Sept. 18 at 2 p.m. The team's first conference matchup in the Roadrunners (5-2-2, 1-0 American) comes after a winless three-game stretch where the Mean Green have gone 0-2-1. UTSA meanwhile have won its last three games heading into the matchup.

# Junior distance runner Alan Proenza returns to field with new role, perspective following injury

**By Rolando Medina**
Staff Writer

Upon the arrival of head coach Erik Stevens to the university in 2022, he had four players on his roster and was seeking runners who could help build a winning program and culture.

As his first cross country season came to a close in November 2022, he searched the area for many potential prospects. Current junior distance runner Alan Proenza, who was a senior at Fossil Ridge High School at the time, reached out to Stevens with interest in the Mean Green's program.

"He was kind of one of those prospects that was a little under the radar," Stevens said. "I didn't necessarily reach out to him at first."

Not long after, Proenza was invited to visit the campus, where he quickly made a strong impression on Stevens, demonstrating the potential to be a key contributor to the team down the line. Stevens's instinct has come to fruition this year, with Proenza being named one of four cross country captains.

The runner's natural tendency to lead by example and hold others accountable was a factor in the decision.

"He was somebody that really did that last year," Stevens said. "Not everybody liked it, but he didn't back down from it."

Before becoming the runner and leader the team anticipates this season, Proenza first experienced a perception-changing broken foot this past year.

The injury occurred on Oct. 13, 2024, at the Arturo Barrios Invitational and sidelined him for nearly three and a half months. It began as a nagging pain in his foot that followed him to the starting line of an 8K.

"I feel like runners kind of tend to push it away a little bit," Proenza said. "I kind of downplayed it to my coach, and then I got to the race and took a bunch of ibuprofen."

More than halfway through the race, the once manageable pain quickly felt insufferable. The sophomore was marked "did not finish," the designation used when a runner exits a race before crossing the finish line. X-rays eventually revealed a fracture in his foot.

The recovery period immediately following the injury involved very little activity. It was uncharted territory for Proenza, who had only ever dealt with minor setbacks in his running career. Previously, the longest he had been removed from the sport due to injury was a month, and his body had to adjust to the change.

"When you're not doing something that your body is so used to, it's harder to eat or drink," Proenza said. "I remember at one point I was probably eating like once a day."

With both his morale and physical activity experiencing sudden changes, Proenza needed to pivot, adding he needed to find who he was outside of the sport.

"I think I just mentally grew because before that injury, my life was really running," Proenza said. "It's still a big part of my life, but I've been able to kind of separate that in what else I do. I'm in organizations on campus [and] I have other friends outside of running [...]."

With time and patience, Proenza was eventually able to adjust to his body's new schedule and his foot started to heal. He said the support of his team helped propel his recovery forward.

"There's not one person on the team that didn't text me and ask me how I was doing," Proenza said. "That's why I'm really happy to be on the team with people that I enjoy, and coach [Stevens] makes that a real big thing."

When Proenza arrived in Fort Worth for the TCU Alumni Invitational in March and competed for the first time since his injury, he had more perspective as an athlete and person than ever before.

Proenza then set a personal best in the 5000M at the TCU Alumni Invitational with a time of 15 minutes and 18.67 seconds.

"He's always ready to compete, and he won't let something linger over him in practice or racing," Sophomore distance runner Nolan House said. "It shows resilience, and that's what we need from a leader."

The race was a culmination of many things for Proenza. To him, it was a display of determination following a transformative period.

"It was really rewarding," Proenza said. "It's just a testament to not giving up because it was a really low point for me."

Now in his junior year and in a leadership role, he said he has reached the other side of his injury and now looking forward to the rest of the new season.

"Just looking back on that, when you cross the [finish] line and you're like, 'I guess that wasn't the end of the world like it felt [back] then,'" Proenza said.

Junior distance runner Alan Proenza (center) practices beside the Soccer and Track & Field Stadium on Sept. 9, 2025. **Photo by Taylor Pleasant**

# Out-of-state students can tackle Texas and overcome university loneliness

By Caitlyn Ybarra
Staff Writer

Illustration by Vianne Ciuro

As students get into the hang of their classes, many have already reconnected with friends made in high school. For out-of-state students, those connections are not always readily available. Without spending hundreds of dollars on travel, the nearest familiar face is through a video screen.

According to the university's 2024-2025 Fall Fact Sheet, out-of-state students make up just 3.16 percent of student enrollment, making it difficult to find others like them

College is a fresh start for everyone, regardless of their background, whether in-state or out-of-state. However, it is an isolating realization for a new student to take in they have no one from home to lean on. While many in-state students can readily reach out to their support systems and navigate the challenges of university independence, out-of-state students' options are not as available.

According to a survey conducted by Active Minds, 64.7 percent of college students reported feeling lonely, with nearly two-thirds of the population surveyed. However, for out-of-state students, the toll of college loneliness can be more challenging to navigate than for in-state students.

Depending on how far their home state is located, going home either means spending hundreds on airfare or a several-hour road trip, both options coming with their own stresses.

The transition to university can be difficult for anyone, but the lack of familiarity for out-of-state students makes it all the more challenging. In addition to adjusting to classes, changing to a whole new world without the safety net of hometown connections is hard.

Even if just a few states north, the shift to Texas culture is as impressive as it is intimidating.

From state pride to the food, the music to rodeos and all the line-dancing in between – moving to Denton can either feel straight out of a Western movie or overwhelming with change. From state pride to the food, the music to rodeos and all the line-dancing in between – moving to Denton can either feel straight out of a Western movie or overwhelming with change. The state's rich history and culture makes it easy to feel like an outsider when surrounded by an area steeped in tradition.

The truth is that while there is no shortage of things to do around Denton, out-of-state students often struggle with where to begin or lack the benefits of having a friend of a friend who knows their way around.

To make friends, out-of-state students must navigate entering social circles that have grown up together, forcing them to put themselves out there with their best foot forward.

Joining a campus organization can help students create new bonds with peers who share their interests and goals The university currently offers around 450 student organizations with a vast expanse of interests that can bring people together.

University students are meant to surround themselves with new experiences and individuals other than those with whom they are familiar. After all, college is about trying new things, finding oneself and figuring out what really matters.

According to UnitedHealthcare, 48 percent of college students said talking to a friend influenced them to seek mental or behavioral health care.

Once successful, the process seems easy, but getting started is daunting and takes a lot of effort.

Unless someone's a pro extrovert, the social exhaustion itself is enough to make anyone cling to the little familiarity they have, whether that be doomscrolling, dorm-rotting or a little bit of both. However, embracing the unfamiliar and stepping into new experiences can help a person become a better version of themselves.

For out-of-state students, the greater the distance from home, the blanker the canvas. There is no one from their past tying them down or any preexisting notions about them.

Finding blessings in disguise like this can make the transition to a new school in a new state a little easier.

Connecting with campus resources, such as the university's Student Health and Wellness Center or academic advisors, is another stepping stone to success. This can help individuals lay out ways to get involved or further adjust to university life. Even when just over a screen, reaching out to family or a close friend for a rant or a reminder of home can also be grounding.

More importantly, using the challenges as fuel rather than a setback is what makes the experience transformative. If a new student can survive the awkward small talk, the lonely nights and the endless Google Maps searches for the nearest grocery store, they can come out with a sense of resilience in their back pocket that many in-state students will never need to build.

Although it can be frustrating, and sometimes it will seem unfair that some students get comfort while others get growing pains. Still, it is essential to remember that frustration does not erase the bigger picture.

Everyone has different reasons and circumstances, but one thing is clear. Every student who attends university is making arguably the biggest investment and commitment to their future they have ever made.

For university students who feel socially isolated during their university years, being patient and allowing oneself some grace can be enough of an accomplishment. Making connections takes time, and quality relationships will make it worth the wait.

# Denton partnering with ICE would cause significant harm to the community

By Kyson Barber
Staff Writer

Illustration by Victoria Maldonado

Denton potentially partnering with Immigration and Customs Enforcement would detrimentally affect Denton by destabilizing communities, tearing apart public trust in city officials and creating division between Denton and its people.

City officials, Mayor Gerard Hudspeth, Police Chief Jessica Robledo and City Manager Sara Hensley met with the ICE Dallas Field Office on Aug. 26. According to the Denton Record-Chronicle, Denton's chief communication officer, Dustin Sternbeck, said that the meeting was "more of an educational opportunity" than a partnership discussion.

The exact contents of the meeting were not disclosed to the public, which brought controversy among the community. This lack of clarity surrounding the meeting led local criminal attorney Richard Gladden to propose an ordinance in ensuring transparency from City Council, in light of ICE recently partnering with the city of Keller under its 287(g) program.

The 287(g) program enables ICE agencies to provide training to local law enforcement. According to the official ICE website, this training grants a city's police the ability to enforce limited immigration authority with ICE oversight.

Over the next several months, the city should have several objectives, with disclosing received information at the top of the list. Details from the meeting that city officials held with ICE need to be communicated and made transparent to the public. The city also needs to discuss its intentions and plan for ICE's presence and reach in Denton.

The proposed 287(g) program has received criticism from different organizations for several reasons. One reason was the lack of oversight it possessed, as several legal offices responsible for investigating federal departments, including civil rights violations in immigration enforcement, were dismantled by President Donald Trump. Its task force model also has a history of civil rights abuses that were discontinued by previous presidents, only to be reintroduced by Trump during his first term.

The 287(g) program is not the only factor that makes Denton's potential partnership with ICE problematic.

ICE received hundreds of concerning reports regarding its civil rights abuses, misleading tactics and cost. The communal and social harm caused by its policies is significant and has had adverse effects on many communities nationwide.

According to KFF, with ICE's presence, many fear walking the streets, going to work and especially going to the courthouse for an immigration hearing, with many being detained when attempting to renew or get help with their legal status.

According to NPR, the fear of being questioned or detained at any time due to racial profiling techniques that were recently made legal by the Supreme Court on Sept. 8, leads to a general anxiety among Spanish speakers and Latinos.

Denton County has an expansive history of Latino and Hispanic culture, with mass migration to the county dating back to the 1930s. The area has long been considered a safe space for Hispanic communities, with the Denton Hispanic Chamber of Commerce even being established in order to promote Hispanic business and their presence in Denton. The university is also federally recognized as a Hispanic Serving Institution, according to the university website.

ICE's policy creates issues not only in communities and cultures, but also conflicts with labor and economics. Labor shortages in businesses have increased, and construction, agriculture and hospitality services have taken a massive hit from these immigration policies. ICE either raids these worksites, or they lead to people, whether here legally or not, being afraid to show up to their job, as they could be detained and questioned with little reasoning.

With ICE poised to grow its force in every local county in Texas and already doing so in towns like Keller, the city needs to reject ICE due to its harmful and controversial nature. However, city leaders still uphold that it is necessary to enforce border security.

Creating safeguards for the communities that will face the most impact is quintessential in protecting the people of Denton. Recently, several counties and states have implemented policies restricting their cooperation with ICE and limiting law enforcement's authority over immigration matters. Actions to help people obtain legal assistance from organizations like the university or the city would also aid in in creating community trust and safety.

Consulting with constituents and working with the communities affected will also be a significant factor in keeping public trust. This comes with transparency about any plans and meetings, but also town halls that are open for public opinion and forums.

City officials need to move forward by being open with the public about their discussions and plans concerning ICE. This means addressing ICE and not allowing a partnership that would hurt communities to take place in Denton.